

Trends in writing proficiency in grades 4, 8, and 11

Effective writing skills are important in all stages of life from early education to future employment. In school, as well as in the business world, students often must convey complex ideas and information in a clear, succinct manner. Inadequate writing skills, therefore, could inhibit achievement across curriculum and in future careers, while proficient writing skills help students convey ideas, deliver instructions, analyze information, and motivate others.

- Despite some fluctuations throughout the years, the average writing proficiency for fourth-grade students was about the same in 1994 as in 1984. Eighth-grade writing scale scores declined between 1984 and 1990, increased in 1992, and then dropped back down to their original level in 1994. Eleventh-grade scores were slightly lower in 1994 than in 1984.
- Females have outscored males in writing proficiency at all levels since 1984.
- Scores for black and Hispanic students have remained relatively unchanged since 1984 at all grade levels. Although scores have dropped slightly for white 11th-graders between 1984 and 1994, white students continue to outscore black and Hispanic students at all grade levels.
- In 1994, 85 percent of 11th-graders could write focused, clear responses (level 250); 33 percent were generally able to write complete, sufficient responses (level 300); and 3 percent provided effective, coherent responses (level 350) (see supplemental table 16-2).
- In 1994, fourth-grade scores ranged from 140 at the 5th percentile to 266 at the 95th percentile. At the eighth-grade level, the median score (50th percentile) was 266, indicating that the highest scoring fourth-graders achieved the same proficiency as the average scoring eighth-graders (see supplemental table 16-3).

Average writing proficiency (scale score), by sex and grade: Selected years 1984–94

Year	Total			Male			Female		
	Grade 4	Grade 8	Grade 11	Grade 4	Grade 8	Grade 11	Grade 4	Grade 8	Grade 11
1984	204	267	¹ 290	³ 201	258	¹ 281	208	276	¹ 299
1988	206	264	¹ 291	199	254	¹ 282	213	274	¹ 299
1990	202	^{1,2} 257	287	195	^{1,2} 246	276	209	^{1,2} 268	¹ 298
1992	207	^{1,2} 274	287	198	¹ 264	279	216	^{1,2} 285	296
1994	205	265	² 285	196	254	² 276	214	278	² 293

Average writing proficiency (scale score), by race/ethnicity and grade: Selected years 1984–94

Year	White			Black			Hispanic		
	Grade 4	Grade 8	Grade 11	Grade 4	Grade 8	Grade 11	Grade 4	Grade 8	Grade 11
1984	211	272	¹ 297	182	247	270	³ 189	247	259
1988	215	269	¹ 296	173	246	275	190	250	274
1990	211	^{1,2} 262	293	171	239	268	184	246	² 277
1992	217	^{1,2} 279	294	175	¹ 258	263	189	^{1,2} 265	274
1994	214	272	² 291	173	245	267	189	252	271

¹ Statistically significant difference from 1994.

² Statistically significant difference from 1984.

³ Data revised from previously published figures.

NOTE: The writing proficiency scale ranges from 0 to 500. (See supplemental table 16-1 for detailed explanations of levels.)

Level 150: Disjointed, unclear writing

Level 200: Incomplete, vague writing

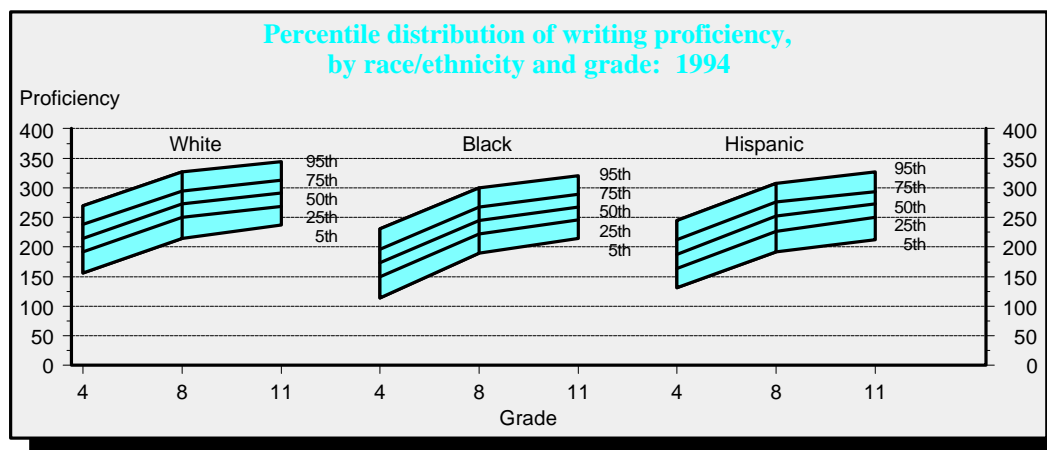
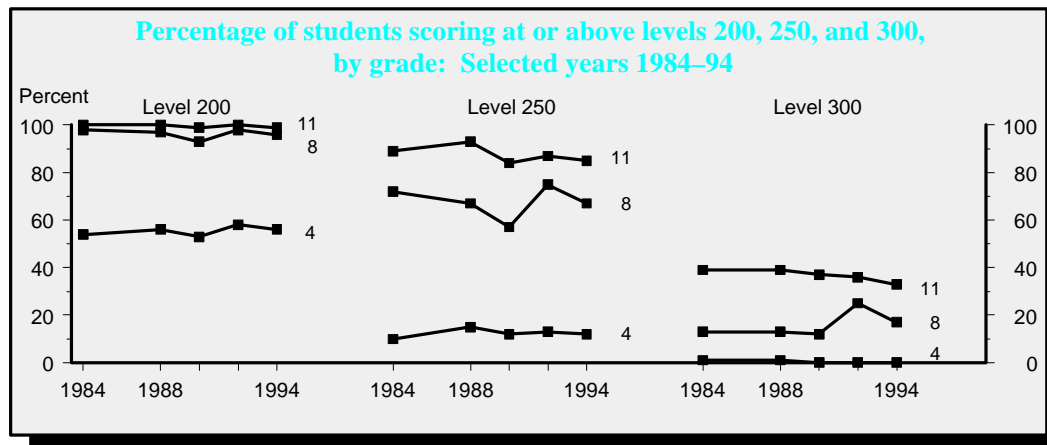
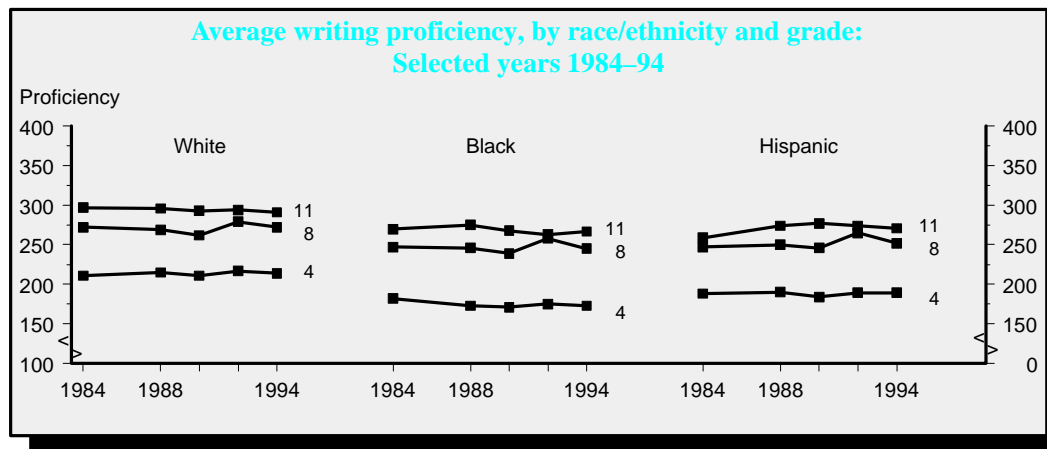
Level 250: Beginning, focused, clear writing

Level 300: Complete, sufficient writing

Level 350: Effective, coherent writing

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress, *Trends in Academic Progress: Achievement of U.S. Students in Science, 1969 to 1994; Mathematics, 1973 to 1994; Reading, 1971 to 1994; Writing, 1984 to 1994, 1996.*

Average writing proficiency (scale score)



* The writing proficiency scale ranges from 0 to 500. (See supplemental table 16-1 for detailed explanations of levels.)

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress, *Trends in Academic Progress: Achievement of U.S. Students in Science, 1969 to 1994; Mathematics, 1973 to 1994; Reading, 1971 to 1994; Writing, 1984 to 1994, 1996.*

Table 16-1 Explanations of levels of writing proficiency

Level 350: Effective, coherent writing

The writing at this level provides clear complete responses to the assigned task. It tends to contain supportive details and discussion that contribute to the effectiveness of the response. This writing is also characterized by an overall unity and coherence not found at the lower levels.

Level 300: Complete, sufficient writing

Responses at this level tend to be complete and to contain sufficient information to accomplish the basic task.

Level 250: Beginning, focused, clear writing

Writing at this level tends to be more focused and clear, containing enough development and detail likely to accomplish the assigned task successfully.

Level 200: Incomplete, vague writing

The writing at this level, although clearer and more detailed than at the previous level, still tends to be vague and incomplete.

Level 150: Disjointed, unclear writing

Writing at this level tends to be too brief and disjointed to be considered a response to the task or, when longer, so vague and unclear that it is hard to understand.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress, *Trends in Academic Progress: Achievement of U.S. Students in Science, 1969 to 1994; Mathematics, 1973 to 1994; Reading, 1971 to 1994; Writing, 1984 to 1994, 1996.*

Table 16-2 Percentage of students at or above each of the five writing proficiency levels, by grade: 1984, 1988, 1990, 1992, and 1994

Proficiency levels	Grade	Year				
		1984	1988	1990	1992	1994
Level 350:	4	0	0	0	0	0
Effective, coherent	8	0	0	1	2	1
writing	11	2	1	4	2	3
Level 300:	4	1	1	0	0	0
Complete, sufficient	8	13	13	12	25	17
writing	11	39	39	37	36	33
Level 250:	4	10	15	12	13	12
Beginning, focused,	8	72	67	51	75	67
clear writing	11	89	93	84	87	85
Level 200:	4	54	56	53	58	56
Incomplete, vague	8	98	97	93	98	96
writing	11	100	100	99	100	99
Level 150:	4	93	91	89	93	92
Disjointed, unclear	8	100	100	100	100	100
writing	11	100	100	100	100	100

* Statistically significant difference from 1994.

^ Statistically significant difference from 1984.

NOTE: See table 16-1 for further description of the proficiency levels.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress, *Trends in Academic Progress: Achievement of U.S. Students in Science, 1969 to 1994; Mathematics, 1973 to 1994; Reading, 1971 to 1994; Writing, 1984 to 1994, 1996.*

**Table 16-3 Percentile distribution of writing proficiency scores, by grade and race/ethnicity:
1984, 1988, 1990, 1992, and 1994**

Percentile	Grade 4					Grade 8					Grade 11				
	1984	1988	1990	1992	1994	1984	1988	1990	1992	1994	1984	1988	1990	1992	1994
All students															
5	144	135	131	142	140	216	209	195	214	204	236	244	227	233	227
10	157	151	147	157	155	227	222	208	227	218	249	255	240	246	240
25	179	177	174	182	180	247	242	231	250	242	269	273	262	266	262
50	204	207	203	208	206	268	264	257	275	266	291	292	288	288	285
75	229	235	231	233	232	288	286	282	300	290	312	311	312	310	308
90	250	259	255	256	253	304	305	304	320	311	330	326	334	328	328
95	263	274	268	269	266	313	316	318	332	323	340	335	347	338	340
White															
5	155	151	146	159	156	224	216	202	220	214	249	252	235	244	237
10	167	165	162	172	170	235	229	215	234	228	260	263	247	256	248
25	188	189	186	194	192	253	248	237	256	250	277	279	269	275	269
50	211	216	211	217	215	273	270	262	280	273	298	297	294	295	291
75	233	242	237	240	238	291	290	287	304	295	316	314	317	314	313
90	255	265	260	261	258	306	309	308	324	315	333	329	338	331	333
95	266	278	272	273	270	315	319	322	335	327	343	338	350	341	344
Black															
5	124	109	105	117	114	201	194	182	200	190	222	232	213	216	214
10	135	122	120	130	127	212	205	193	212	201	232	243	225	226	226
25	160	148	144	152	150	228	226	216	232	222	252	258	245	245	246
50	182	173	172	176	173	248	247	240	257	245	270	276	268	264	267
75	205	200	198	198	196	265	266	263	282	268	290	294	291	283	289
90	228	224	223	218	217	281	285	284	306	288	309	309	311	300	309
95	240	238	239	229	231	292	296	297	319	300	318	318	324	309	320
Hispanic															
5	130	125	120	132	131	197	199	187	203	192	208	228	217	220	212
10	141	139	135	144	143	207	210	199	219	204	216	236	232	234	224
25	162	163	159	166	164	225	230	220	242	227	238	256	253	252	250
50	188	191	184	189	188	247	251	246	265	252	260	274	275	275	273
75	214	218	210	213	213	268	271	270	288	276	281	294	301	294	294
90	234	241	234	234	234	286	290	292	310	298	297	309	324	314	313
95	247	256	248	247	245	298	301	305	324	308	306	316	338	324	327

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress, *Trends in Academic Progress: Achievement of U.S. Students in Science, 1969 to 1994; Mathematics, 1973 to 1994; Reading, 1971 to 1994; Writing, 1984 to 1994, 1996.*

Table 16-4 Average writing proficiency, by grade and parents' highest education level: 1984, 1988, 1990, 1992, and 1994

Parents' highest education level	Year	Grade 4		Grade 8		Grade 11	
		Percentage of students	Average proficiency	Percentage of students	Average proficiency	Percentage of students	Average proficiency
Less than a high school graduate	1984	17	179	10	258	11	274
	1988	5	194	8	254	8	276
	1990	6	186	8	246	8	268
	1992	5	191	7	258	8	271
	1994	4	188	7	250	8	268
Graduated high school	1984	20	192	35	261	35	284
	1988	18	199	31	258	30	285
	1990	18	197	33	252	30	278
	1992	17	202	29	268	27	278
	1994	16	202	27	259	26	279
Some education after high school	1984	5	208	10	271	15	298
	1988	5	211	11	275	18	296
	1990	5	214	12	267	18	292
	1992	6	201	12	280	20	292
	1994	5	212	12	270	20	286
Graduated college	1984	33	218	36	278	36	300
	1988	41	212	41	270	41	299
	1990	40	209	38	265	40	298
	1992	42	214	44	284	43	296
	1994	43	212	46	275	44	293

* Statistically significant difference from 1994.

* Statistically significant difference from 1984.

NOTE: "Percentage of students" represents the percentage of all students in each subgroup. Not shown are about one-third of students at age 9 and smaller percentages at ages 13 and 17 who did not know their parents' highest education level.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress, *Trends in Academic Progress: Achievement of U.S. Students in Science, 1969 to 1994; Mathematics, 1973 to 1994; Reading, 1971 to 1994; Writing, 1984 to 1994, 1996.*

Table 16-5 Average writing proficiency scores, by age and grade: 1984, 1988, 1990, 1992, and 1994

Year	Above modal age ¹		At modal age ¹		Below modal age ¹	
	Percentage	Proficiency	Percentage	Proficiency	Percentage	Proficiency
Grade 4						
1984	36	190	63	212	1	204
1988	38	199	61	210	1	⁴ 225
1990	³ 40	196	59	205	0	226
1992	^{4,3} 44	201	^{4,3} 56	212	0	166
1994	39	200	60	208	1	173
Grade 8						
1984	⁴ 35	258	⁴ 64	272	1	⁴ 242
1988	³ 40	254	³ 59	271	1	259
1990	³ 40	^{4,3} 248	^{4,3} 59	^{4,3} 262	1	³ 304
1992	³ 41	⁴ 263	³ 58	³ 282	1	³ 289
1994	³ 42	256	³ 57	272	1	³ 279
Grade 11						
1984	⁴ 20	267	⁴ 67	⁴ 296	13	294
1988	⁴ 21	270	⁴ 68	⁴ 297	11	299
1990	³ 25	270	³ 64	292	11	295
1992	³ 26	269	64	293	10	295
1994	³ 26	269	³ 64	³ 289	11	291

¹The modal age is the most common age of students in a particular grade level. For example, the modal age in fourth grade is nine years old. Ten-year-olds in fourth grade are above the modal age, and 8-year-olds in fourth grade are below the modal age.

² Statistically significant difference from 1994.

³ Statistically significant difference from 1984.

NOTE: The modal age is the age that the average student has reached at a certain grade level. Students above the modal age are older than their average cohort, and students below the modal age are younger than their average cohort. The modal ages are: age 9 at grade 4, age 13 at grade 8, and age 17 at grade 11. The modal age is higher for 11th-graders because of differences in the time of year the test is given to the different grade levels, causing more students to be below the modal age at 11th-grade than at any other grade. For more information on the ages and grades of students tested, see the supplemental note to *Indicator 15*.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress, *Trends in Academic Progress: Achievement of U.S. Students in Science, 1969 to 1994; Mathematics, 1973 to 1994; Reading, 1971 to 1994; Writing, 1984 to 1994, 1996*.

Table S16-1 Standard errors for table 16-2

Proficiency levels	Grade	Year				
		1984	1988	1990	1992	1994
Level 350:	4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Effective, coherent writing	8	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.2
	11	0.7	0.4	0.7	0.4	0.3
Level 300:	4	0.4	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.2
Complete, sufficient writing	8	1.8	0.8	0.8	1.5	1.2
	11	2.4	1.7	1.1	1.9	1.5
Level 250:	4	1.0	1.1	0.9	1.1	0.8
Beginning, focused, clear writing	8	2.6	1.7	1.5	1.4	1.3
	11	1.0	1.5	1.3	1.3	1.2
Level 200:	4	2.0	2.0	1.7	1.9	2.0
Incomplete, vague writing	8	0.9	0.6	0.6	0.4	0.6
	11	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.2
Level 150:	4	1.3	0.8	1.1	0.5	0.9
Disjointed, unclear writing	8	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
	11	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress, *Trends in Academic Progress:*

Achievement of U.S. Students in Science, 1969 to 1994; Mathematics, 1973 to 1994; Reading, 1971 to 1994; Writing, 1984 to 1994, 1996.

Table S16-2 Standard errors for table 16-3

Percentile	Grade 4					Grade 8					Grade 11				
	1984	1988	1990	1992	1994	1984	1988	1990	1992	1994	1984	1988	1990	1992	1994
All students															
5	3.3	3.3	1.8	1.9	2.6	4.3	2.9	2.3	2.0	3.4	2.3	4.5	2.7	3.3	2.0
10	2.7	1.9	2.3	1.3	3.3	3.7	2.6	1.9	2.9	2.5	1.7	2.4	2.4	2.1	2.1
25	2.1	1.6	2.1	1.4	2.3	3.1	1.9	1.4	1.5	2.0	1.7	1.9	1.8	1.7	1.7
50	2.9	2.5	1.7	2.2	1.3	2.6	1.4	1.6	1.6	1.3	1.9	1.3	1.3	1.2	1.7
75	1.5	1.8	2.3	1.6	1.4	2.1	1.2	1.7	1.7	1.5	1.7	1.2	1.4	1.7	1.5
90	2.2	2.1	2.1	1.8	1.3	1.8	1.4	1.3	1.7	1.8	2.6	1.4	1.8	1.5	1.4
95	2.7	2.6	2.7	2.9	2.7	2.0	1.8	1.8	1.6	1.5	2.9	1.6	2.7	2.3	1.3
White															
5	3.6	4.3	3.0	2.3	4.7	5.7	2.3	2.3	3.4	3.1	3.8	3.7	3.4	1.2	2.5
10	3.3	3.1	3.5	1.7	2.9	3.2	1.4	2.9	2.6	2.1	2.2	2.8	2.7	2.0	1.3
25	1.5	1.8	2.9	1.9	2.2	2.3	1.8	1.9	1.7	1.7	1.4	1.7	1.6	1.1	1.5
50	2.2	1.8	1.9	2.3	1.0	2.7	1.5	1.6	1.7	2.0	2.0	1.2	1.1	1.3	2.2
75	1.4	2.1	2.2	1.6	2.1	2.3	1.3	1.8	1.9	1.5	2.6	1.3	1.3	1.8	1.6
90	4.5	2.6	1.6	2.2	1.4	2.0	1.7	1.8	2.4	2.0	2.6	1.3	2.2	1.4	1.9
95	3.5	3.3	2.4	2.8	2.7	2.5	1.3	1.8	2.5	2.3	4.0	2.8	2.8	2.5	2.1
Black															
5	6.5	7.6	5.2	5.7	9.2	7.2	5.2	5.7	8.1	6.2	8.5	6.2	5.4	5.0	7.0
10	4.5	5.9	6.8	4.2	4.8	6.8	6.1	4.0	7.4	4.4	6.8	2.9	3.0	3.2	5.1
25	4.9	5.5	4.9	4.5	4.9	6.9	3.4	4.4	4.7	6.1	5.5	3.3	2.3	5.8	3.4
50	5.5	4.6	6.0	4.2	3.8	6.7	4.3	2.4	3.6	3.8	3.3	3.0	3.2	3.9	2.6
75	13.6	4.6	7.0	3.3	4.0	3.7	3.3	2.7	4.6	4.2	4.6	3.0	4.0	4.3	2.4
90	10.2	6.0	6.5	3.6	6.4	5.4	5.7	1.6	3.3	7.1	7.8	4.9	2.3	4.1	2.1
95	12.0	5.8	23.2	6.4	6.4	3.6	4.4	3.1	4.7	3.7	5.0	3.8	4.4	5.1	3.2
Hispanic															
5	13.1	6.0	7.5	5.1	4.9	13.9	5.9	5.4	6.4	4.9	10.8	6.2	9.7	10.6	7.9
10	12.3	6.1	7.6	5.1	5.2	11.7	7.1	3.7	5.1	3.9	6.5	8.4	4.1	2.7	8.3
25	8.7	5.1	7.1	3.4	4.7	7.6	5.3	3.6	5.0	5.1	7.5	6.2	4.0	6.0	6.6
50	6.4	5.1	5.4	4.3	4.6	7.0	2.9	4.7	2.1	3.2	8.2	3.9	3.2	4.6	4.9
75	8.0	4.5	3.8	5.1	4.0	4.2	2.4	5.0	4.3	3.9	7.1	8.7	6.0	4.9	4.0
90	6.5	4.3	4.8	5.5	5.0	5.8	2.4	3.3	3.3	6.2	9.8	5.6	3.9	3.5	3.0
95	7.5	4.8	5.8	3.5	5.1	7.7	5.4	3.3	3.5	5.7	16.8	5.4	15.8	3.1	6.8

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress, *Trends in Academic Progress: Achievement of U.S. Students in Science, 1969 to 1994; Mathematics, 1973 to 1994; Reading, 1971 to 1994; Writing, 1984 to 1994, 1996.*

Table S16-3 Standard errors for table 16-4

Parents' highest education level	Year	Grade 4		Grade 8		Grade 11	
		Percentage of students	Average proficiency	Percentage of students	Average proficiency	Percentage of students	Average proficiency
Less than a high school graduate	1984	0.6	4.6	0.8	4.8	1.2	5.2
	1988	0.7	5.4	0.7	3.9	0.8	3.5
	1990	0.5	3.9	0.6	3.7	0.5	4.0
	1992	0.4	3.2	0.8	5.3	0.8	3.7
	1994	0.4	7.8	0.4	4.1	0.7	4.7
Graduated high school	1984	1.1	3.4	1.4	1.6	2.0	3.0
	1988	1.1	3.0	1.2	2.1	1.2	2.2
	1990	0.9	3.0	1.1	1.4	1.1	2.2
	1992	0.7	3.2	1.1	1.6	0.9	2.2
	1994	0.9	2.3	1.4	2.2	1.1	1.7
Some education after high school	1984	0.4	6.5	0.8	3.9	0.9	2.5
	1988	0.5	6.3	0.6	3.3	0.8	2.6
	1990	0.4	4.0	0.7	3.0	0.6	2.7
	1992	0.4	4.5	0.7	2.2	0.8	2.0
	1994	0.5	4.0	0.7	3.1	1.0	1.7
Graduated college	1984	1.4	3.0	1.5	1.8	1.6	2.4
	1988	1.5	2.2	1.5	1.8	1.8	2.0
	1990	1.6	1.6	1.5	1.8	1.4	2.0
	1992	1.0	1.4	1.8	1.9	1.4	1.4
	1994	1.4	2.1	1.6	1.3	1.9	1.5

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress, *Trends in Academic Progress: Achievement of U.S. Students in Science, 1969 to 1994; Mathematics, 1973 to 1994; Reading, 1971 to 1994; Writing, 1984 to 1994, 1996.*

Table S16-4 Standard errors for table 16-5

Year	Above modal age		At modal age		Below modal age	
	Percentage	Proficiency	Percentage	Proficiency	Percentage	Proficiency
Grade 4						
1984	1.0	4.5	1.0	2.5	0.3	21.1
1988	0.6	2.0	0.5	2.5	0.2	12.8
1990	1.1	1.7	1.1	2.7	0.1	21.8
1992	1.1	1.9	1.1	1.5	0.1	10.6
1994	1.0	3.0	1.0	1.6	0.2	19.2
Grade 8						
1984	1.4	3.2	1.4	1.8	0.3	11.5
1988	0.3	1.9	0.2	1.2	0.2	17.4
1990	0.3	1.7	0.3	1.5	0.2	11.4
1992	1.2	1.8	1.2	1.3	0.2	11.4
1994	1.0	2.4	1.0	1.2	0.2	9.1
Grade 11						
1984	1.5	3.1	1.2	1.4	1.3	3.8
1988	0.7	4.5	0.2	1.2	0.8	2.1
1990	0.7	2.0	0.2	1.1	0.7	4.3
1992	0.9	2.0	0.2	1.7	0.8	4.0
1994	0.9	3.4	0.3	0.9	0.9	3.2

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress, *Trends in Academic Progress: Achievement of U.S. Students in Science, 1969 to 1994; Mathematics, 1973 to 1994; Reading, 1971 to 1994; Writing, 1984 to 1994, 1996.*

Table S16(a) Standard errors for the first text table in *Indicator 16*

Year	Total			Male			Female		
	Grade 4	Grade 8	Grade 11	Grade 4	Grade 8	Grade 11	Grade 4	Grade 8	Grade 11
1984	1.5	2.0	1.6	2.8	2.3	1.4	3.1	2.4	2.5
1988	1.6	1.3	1.3	2.3	1.5	2.0	2.0	1.7	1.2
1990	1.5	1.2	1.0	1.9	1.5	1.6	2.2	1.3	1.5
1992	1.5	1.3	1.4	1.7	1.9	1.2	1.7	1.3	2.0
1994	1.6	1.3	1.2	1.7	1.8	1.5	2.2	1.4	1.5

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress, *Trends in Academic Progress: Achievement of U.S. Students in Science, 1969 to 1994; Mathematics, 1973 to 1994; Reading, 1971 to 1994; Writing, 1984 to 1994, 1996.*

Table S16(b) Standard errors for the second text table in *Indicator 16*

Year	White			Black			Hispanic		
	Grade 4	Grade 8	Grade 11	Grade 4	Grade 8	Grade 11	Grade 4	Grade 8	Grade 11
1984	1.9	2.1	1.8	5.0	5.7	3.6	5.8	6.4	6.6
1988	1.9	1.3	1.3	4.7	3.5	2.9	3.5	2.5	4.4
1990	2.0	1.6	1.2	5.4	2.3	2.3	4.1	2.8	2.6
1992	1.7	1.3	1.2	3.8	4.0	3.2	3.6	2.2	3.8
1994	1.5	1.4	1.4	3.2	3.4	2.2	3.1	3.3	4.0

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress, *Trends in Academic Progress: Achievement of U.S. Students in Science, 1969 to 1994; Mathematics, 1973 to 1994; Reading, 1971 to 1994; Writing, 1984 to 1994, 1996.*

Average writing proficiency (scale score), by grade and sex: Selected years 1984–94

Year	Total			Male			Female		
	Grade 4	Grade 8	Grade 11	Grade 4	Grade 8	Grade 11	Grade 4	Grade 8	Grade 11
1984	204	267	290 ¹	201	258	281	208	276	299
1988	206	264	291	199	254	282	213	274	299
1990	202	257 ²	287	195	246 ²	276	209	268 ²	298
1992	207	274 ²	287	198	264 ²	279	216	285 ²	296
1994	205	265	285	196	254	276 ²	214	278	293

¹ Statistically significant difference from 1994.

² Statistically significant difference from 1984.

³ Data revised from previously published figures.

NOTE: The writing proficiency scale has a range from 0 to 500. (See supplemental table 16-1 for detailed explanations of levels.)

Level 150: Disjointed, unclear writing

Level 300: Complete, sufficient writing

Level 200: Incomplete, vague writing

Level 350: Effective, coherent writing

Level 250: Beginning, focused, clear writing

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress, *Trends in Academic Progress: Achievement of U.S. Students in Science, 1969 to 1994; Mathematics, 1973 to 1994; Reading, 1971 to 1994; Writing, 1984 to 1994*, 1996.

Average writing proficiency (scale score), by race/ethnicity and grade: Selected years 1984–94

Year	White			Black			Hispanic		
	Grade 4	Grade 8	Grade 11	Grade 4	Grade 8	Grade 11	Grade 4	Grade 8	Grade 11
1984	211	272	¹ 297	182	247	270	² 189	247	259
1988	215	269	² 296	173	246	275	190	250	274
1990	211	³ 262	293	171	239	268	184	246	³ 277
1992	217	³ 279	294	175	³ 258	263	189	³ 265	274
1994	214	272	³ 291	173	245	267	189	252	271

¹ Statistically significant difference from 1994.

² Statistically significant difference from 1984.

³ Data revised from previously published figures.

NOTE: The writing proficiency scale has a range from 0 to 500. (See supplemental table 16-1 for detailed explanations of levels.)

Level 150: Disjointed, unclear writing

Level 300: Complete, sufficient writing

Level 200: Incomplete, vague writing

Level 350: Effective, coherent writing

Level 250: Beginning, focused, clear writing

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress, *Trends in Academic Progress: Achievement of U.S. Students in Science, 1969 to 1994; Mathematics, 1973 to 1994; Reading, 1971 to 1994; Writing, 1984 to 1994, 1996.*